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SUBJECT: SINO-NIGERIEN COOPERATION; PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC)  
FRANCOPHONE AFRICA JOURNALISTS' SEMINAR

Ref: a) July 24 and 27, 2009 Le Sahel News Publication, b) 08  
Niamey 1066, c) 08 Niamey 958, d) 08 Niamey 628/606, e) 08 Niamey  
452, f) 07 Niamey 1359

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¶1. Summary. Le Sahel (the state newspaper) prominently featured reports on the Sino-Nigerien and Sino-African partnerships this past week. Journalist Saidou Daoura filed a front-page image of Beijing with the headline "The Marvels of the Middle Empire" together with a two-page story and a full-page interview with the Nigerien Ambassador to the PRC Boubakar Adamou (also accredited to Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)), in Le Sahel's July 24 edition. He was one among a group of Francophone African journalists invited to the PRC for a 10-day (June 29-July 14, 2009) seminar, organized by the PRC Diplomacy Institute and financed by the PRC Ministries of Commerce and Foreign Affairs.

¶2. An update on the Chinese construction of Niger's first oil refinery, located in the region of Zinder (approximately 500 miles east of the capital city of Niamey), was featured in Le Sahel's July 27 edition.  
End summary.

¶3. Comment: These reports have appeared in the state newspaper at a time when Nigerien President Tandja reacted negatively to international partners' demarches to him to express concern about the current political environment in Niger. End comment.

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RON-PRC Cooperation  
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¶4. Ambassador Adamou's interview noted that RON-PRC diplomatic relations began 35 years ago, on July 20, 1974. He stated that the Government of Niger appointed Idrissa Harouna as its first ambassador to China in 1978. He added that currently seven officials are assigned to the Nigerien Embassy in the PRC. Japan and North Korea (DPRK) also fall under the Embassy's jurisdiction. He estimated some 300 Nigerien expatriates live and work in the PRC.

Amadou emphasized the growing interest among Nigerien business persons to diversify their partners and expand their markets, resulting in increased efforts to sell products on the Chinese market.

15. Adamou stressed that the RON's engagements with the PRC are consistent with the global framework of expanding relations between the PRC and the African continent since the creation of the Forum on Sino-African Cooperation in 2000. He stated that South-South cooperation has included increased loans and credits, more development assistance in lieu of direct aid, the creation of a Sino-African development fund, cancellation of debt and the opening of the Chinese market to African products. Labeling Sino-Nigerien cooperation one of Niger's most fruitful partnerships, he lauded several ongoing development projects in Niger, primarily in the areas of agriculture, hydrology, environment and infrastructure. He spoke of the many high-level visits that have contributed to the deepening of RON-PRC relations, including Nigerien President Mamadou Tandja's attendance at the Beijing Summit in November 2006, subsequent GON officials' visit to China (ref c) and high-level Chinese visits to Niger.

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RON-Japan Cooperation  
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16. Amadou closed the interview with a discussion of the RON-Japan bilateral relationship and engagements. He estimated that there are about a dozen Nigerien expatriates who live in Japan. He highlighted RON Prime Minister Seini Oumarou's participation in the 4th Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD 4) held in Yokohama in May 2008. He stated that the Yokohama Plan of Action, as it relates to the RON, covers technical and non-repayable financial cooperation in the areas of education, rural development, health and environment. Phase two of an education project, Education for All, focuses on improving teaching of science and mathematics in secondary school and includes construction of primary and secondary schools. Other projects relate to food security, elimination of Guinea worm, providing potable water, and fighting

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malaria and polio. He added that Niger is one of four beneficiary countries in Japan's recently launched "Cool Earth Promotion Program"; the other three beneficiary countries are Senegal, Mozambique and Ethiopia.

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Oil Refinery Project Progress Report  
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17. Nigerien President Tandja placed the first stone for the oil refinery project in October 2008 (ref a) with a completion time projected to be three years (2011). According to the Zinder Refinery Company (SORAZ) Vice President Mai Manga Boukar and the Chinese partners, the project is moving forward, though slowed as a result of the three-month delivery time for materials ordered from China. It was noted that the nearest port is at least 2000 kilometers from Zinder. The other problem has been water; a program is in place to complete 22 to 24 wells to meet water needs estimated at 7000 cubic meters of water per day. The project managers expect the refinery will begin operation in 2011 and project production at 20,000 barrels of oil a day, equivalent to one million tons of oil annually. Reportedly, 60 percent of the oil production will be used for domestic consumption; the remaining 40 percent of oil produced would be available for export. Once the refinery is fully operational, employment is anticipated for 600 direct hires, as well as another 3000 persons affiliated with subcontracts. The company has indicated that 50-plus Nigerien youth will benefit from training on the project beginning in October 2009.

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Francophone African Journalists' 10-day PRC Seminar  
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18. Nigerien journalist Saidou Daoura reported that the seminar themes addressed China's history, culture and economy, Sino-African relations, ethnic minority autonomy and the media. Beijing and Gansu Province served, respectively, as venues for six-day and four-day visits. Tourist spots visited included Olympic Stadium, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Heavenly Temple, to name a few. Reportedly, much attention was focused on China's Africa policy to maintain an equal partnership in adherence to five principles of peaceful coexistence, respect the African nations'

free choice of path to development and support African nations' efforts to increase their power.

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Chinese Projects and Loans Reflect Value of UN Vote  
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¶9. The journalists were advised that the PRC Government has initiated 800 projects and activated some 100 preferential loans for African countries. Citing the 1860-kilometer Tanzania-Zambia railway as a project completed with PRC assistance, Chinese officials informed the journalists their government "would never forget that in 1971 it was the support of African nations and other developing countries that permitted the PRC to regain its seat in the United Nations." According to Saidou Daoura, African nations should draw lessons from PRC's development of the last 30 years.

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Details on Increasing China-Africa Trade and Investment  
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¶10. The following is a snapshot of trade between the PRC and Africa from 1950 to the present, as reported to (and repeated by) the journalists:

1950 12 million US dollars  
2000 10+ billion US dollars  
2007 73+ billion US dollars (up 32 percent from 2006)  
2008 106+ billion US dollars (up 45 percent from 2007)

¶11. At the end of 2007, PRC investment in Africa was reported as 14.6 billion US dollars in 48 countries, in the areas of agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, textiles, energy, infrastructure, hydrology and electricity.

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Chinese High-Level Visits, Cultural Projects Abound

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¶12. Also, in 2007, the PRC signed with African nations 66 cultural agreements, completed 164 cultural projects, opened cultural centers in Benin, Mauritius and Egypt. Finally, in 2008, the PRC Government reportedly awarded 20,000 scholarships for African students. It was noted that Chinese President Hu Jintao made four trips to Africa (2004, 2006, 2007 and 2009), National Assembly President Wu Bangguo traveled to Africa three times (2004, 2007 and 2008), Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited in 2006, President of the National Committee for Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Jia Qinglin visited in 2007. Since 1991, the PRC Ministers of Foreign Affairs have most often made Africa their first trip abroad.

¶13. The PRC continues to make inroads on the African continent, even in landlocked Niger.

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